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MONTHLY REVIEW

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SOCIALISM IS THE ONLY ANSWER

THE EDITORS

VOL. 3

1

THE AMERICAN RULING CLASS

PAUL M. SWEEZY

FREEDOM UNDER SOCIALISM

ARTHUR K. DAVIS

EDITORS . . . LEO HUBERMAN . . . PAUL M. SWEEZY

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

As we go to press, there is no evidence at all that the dismissal of MacArthur resulted from any change in the Far Eastern policy of the United States government. What it did signify was the rejection by the administration of MacArthur's policy of an *immediate* expansion of the Korean war into a general war against China—and very probably into World War III. The further implications of MacArthur's fall, however, are still far from clear. We shall return to this subject at length in next month's issue, by which time it ought to be possible to see these events more clearly and in better perspective.

Renewal time—the end of Volume II—has brought more than the usual quota of encouraging letters. It is good to know that MR is appreciated, that there is room in this country even (or should we say “particularly”?) in this time of hysteria for a magazine that endeavors to analyze the world from a socialist point of view, in English rather than in jargon. Thanks to readers who took the time to write.

Need we say, however, that we are especially grateful to those who sent filled-in sub blanks along with their friendly letters? If MR is as good as these readers say it is, then pretty clearly it ought to be reaching more people.

Which brings us to the perennial problem: how to reach more people. Our best sub-getters tell us that the biggest difficulty is a simple one—most people just never heard of MR. That's undoubtedly, and unhappily, true. We wish we had money enough to do a lot more conventional advertising, but since we haven't and since getting more subscribers is a must, we are always looking for new answers. Recently we found what we think is a good one—in a letter written to a friend by Robert Shillaker (whose article “An Ap-

(continued on inside back cover)

SOCIALISM IS THE ONLY ANSWER

On April 3rd, President Truman laid the cornerstone of a new church building in Washington. He took the occasion to deliver a sermon on the need for morality in public and private life. In the course of his sermon, the President stated that

the evils of the sweatshop and the slum, the evils of needless disease and poverty, and the evils of social injustice are, at bottom, moral issues. Such conditions arise because men have neglected the moral law. They arise because men do not actually live up to the religious principles they profess to believe in.

And President Truman himself? Surely he must be a resolute opponent of all these evils? Surely the nation's first citizen must set a model for his countrymen, must actually live up to the religious principles he professes to believe in?

Let us look at a revealing part of the record. Let us look at a situation which manifests all the evils of sweatshop and slum, of needless disease and poverty, of social injustice in its crassest and most despicable forms, and let us observe President Truman's behavior on coming into close contact with this situation.

The *New York Times* and one of its feature writers, Gladwin Hill, recently performed a journalistic service of a kind which is becoming increasingly rare—the uncompromising exposure of social evils. In a series of articles (March 25-29), they turned the spotlight of publicity on the exploitation of illegal Mexican immigrants in the southwest border states. The gist of the series is well summed up in the headlines of the first four articles:

March 25. MILLION A YEAR FLEE MEXICO ONLY TO FIND PEONAGE HERE. Illegal Migration Across 1,600-Mile Border by Seasonal Slave Labor Depresses Latin and American Levels Alike.

March 26. PEONS NET FARMERS A FABULOUS PROFIT. Illegal Migrants from Mexico Working Rich Soil of West a Bonanza to Exploiters. PAY 15 TO 25 CENTS A DAY. And Many Receive Food Alone, While Shelter is a Hut, a Thatch, or the Stars.

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March 27. PEONS IN THE WEST LOWERING CULTURE. Illegal Migrants from Mexico Form Vast Unassimilable Block of Population. ALL STANDARDS DECLINE. Health, Education, Democracy in Areas Where 'Wetbacks' Work Are Deplorable.

March 28. SOUTHWEST WINKS AT 'WETBACK' USE. Ethics Cast Aside as Growers Accept Peonage Idea and Bridle at Interference. FEDERAL SANCTION NOTED. Border Patrol Officers Report Pressures from Washington to 'Go Easy' in Raids.

It doesn't sound like the sedate and conservative *New York Times*, and yet the truth is that the headlines are in no way sensationalized. They give a sober summary of a calm and well-documented text. There can be no doubt that these are facts, terrible and damaging facts, about a large area of the United States, not in the days of slavery but right now, this very minute. Moreover, the evils which they portray are not disappearing; on the contrary, they have been rapidly growing and spreading in the last decade.

And now let us observe President Truman in contact with these evils, the very same President Truman who calls them moral issues while laying cornerstones of churches and appealing to his fellow citizens to live up to the religious principles which he and they profess to believe in.

According to Gladwin Hill:

It was in [the El Paso Immigration District], during the 1948 presidential campaign, that there occurred the notorious "El Paso tea party." The supply of Mexican labor had not been sufficient to satisfy farmers of the area.

As reported by Art Leibson of *The El Paso Times*, "When President Truman came to El Paso for a campaign address, the problem was laid before him by cotton men and by Texas and New Mexico Congressmen. Soon after his train moved east through Texas, there was a meeting of top immigration officials at El Paso." What went on behind the scenes is still a matter of equivocal explanation by immigration officials. What happened openly was that—in outright violation of United States commitments, according to the subsequent protest of the Mexican government—border-patrol officers turned their backs for forty-eight hours, while some 7,500 "wetbacks" streamed across the river unhindered to fill the farmers' needs.

It would appear that there are two President Trumans. One is a layer of church cornerstones. The other is a practical politician, the leader of the Democratic Party, and the head of the entire administrative apparatus of the Federal government. One preaches morality. The other, it would seem, helps to arrange the importation of slave

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labor (the term is the *Times'*, not ours) for the benefit of profit-hungry farmers and in flat violation of the law of the land and the solemn international commitments of the United States government.

How shall we explain this? Is Harry S. Truman a specially bad man, a conscienceless hypocrite and scoundrel?

Hardly. He seems to be no better and no worse than most of us. Indeed, if fate had not interrupted his career as a haberdasher in Independence, Missouri, he would probably be today a good candidate for the title of Mr. Smalltown American.

The explanation must be sought elsewhere than in the moral character of Harry Truman. It must be sought in the pressures and demands of a system which ultimately subordinates everything to the making of private profits. Greed and exploitation, double-dealing and deceit, corruption and hypocrisy are all built into the foundations of such a system. It fixes a stigma on its functionaries which they can never wipe out.

These truths, which incidentally are the starting point of genuine socialism as distinct from mere liberal reformism, have had many striking illustrations recently.

Take the sphere of foreign policy, for example. Everyone who has ever read as much as a paragraph of one of Secretary Acheson's speeches knows that the purpose of United States policy is to defend freedom, justice, and peace. That, of course, explains why we let Nazi war criminals out of jail, do all we can to rearm Germany and Japan under essentially their old imperialist masters, bolster up the exploitative empires of the western European nations, remain strictly silent in the face of the unspeakable racial brutalities of South Africa, and lend our wholehearted economic and political support to every reactionary butcher from Franco and Salazar in Europe to Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee and Bao Dai in Asia. That explains, too, why we must blast and incinerate the Korean people off the face of the earth. We are in Korea, you see, not to save the Korean people but to save their freedom.

Or take the Washington scene. A Senate investigating committee, under the chairmanship of Senator Fulbright, has been spreading on the record a sordid story of fraud and corruption in the RFC—a story which implicates businessmen and politicians and civil servants alike, and in about equal measure. But, says President Truman at a press conference, the men around him are honorable men, all honorable men. Very likely they are—just like the President himself. He probably doesn't realize it, but what he is really saying is that corruption is in the system and not in the men who appear to run it. For once we find ourselves in complete agreement with him.

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An even more instructive story is what may be called the "case of the ship money." This is still under Congressional scrutiny, and it may turn out to have as yet unsuspected angles. But on the basis of what has been published to date, it looks as though everything had been legal and aboveboard. Let us assume that nothing illegal is discovered: the moral of the story is then all the plainer.

The gist of the case is that Joseph E. Casey, a Washington lawyer, by a series of complicated corporate manipulations, bought surplus oil tankers from the government and disposed of them at an enormous profit which was taxed at the 25 percent rate applicable to capital gains rather than at the much higher rates which would have been payable under the income tax. Associated with Mr. Casey in these deals were a number of highly respectable and influential citizens: the late Edward R. Stettinius, former Secretary of State; Fleet Admiral William F. Halsey, naval hero of World War II; and General Julius C. Holmes, wartime head of G-5 (the military government branch of the General Staff), later Assistant Secretary of State, and at the present time American Minister in London. There were two or three others in the group, and all together, according to Jack Steele's account in the *Herald Tribune* of April 1st, they realized a profit of \$2,800,000 in three years on an investment of \$100,000—which works out to an annual rate of profit of between 900 and 1,000 percent. Mr. Casey himself put up \$20,000 but realized "only" \$280,000 because he transferred part of his holdings to a fellow Washington attorney. Messrs. Stettinius and Holmes took in \$280,000 each on investments of \$10,000; and Admiral Halsey made \$140,000 on an investment of \$5,000.

And who is this Joseph E. Casey? Why, bless you, he's the same Joe Casey who used to sit in the House of Representatives from Massachusetts' Fourth Congressional District: a trusted supporter of FDR, an ardent New Dealer, a shining knight of liberalism and reform.

There you have it. Reformers and heroes, generals and statesmen, brokers and lawyers—honorable men, all honorable men—and all obeying capitalism's first commandment: make your pile while the making's good. And what was it that enabled this particular group to invest their little nest-eggs at better than 900 percent? Was it exceptional ability? Some great contribution to the country's welfare? No, hardly. It was just that they happened to be on the inside and that one of them was clever enough to figure out how to beat the tax collector. Simple, isn't it? And what's more, dear reader, you are free to do the same. That's what we mean by freedom in this man's country. That's our system of equality of opportunity at work. That's

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what has made the United States of America. . . . But we needn't go on. Just turn on the radio and the announcer will finish the sentence for you.

Another recent scandal has been the "fixing" of college basketball games by big-time professional gamblers. What have we here? Just a few boys' succumbing to temptation? Or is it something deeper? Listen to what Senator Fulbright said in an important speech on the Senate floor on March 27:

Let us consider what has developed in our colleges where the characters of our young men and women are being molded. Our colleges, under extreme pressure from the alumni, have become so intent on winning football and basketball games that they use any means to gain their ends.

They hire players who are not bona fide students and thus make a mockery, a farce, of the whole concept of amateur sport for the health and entertainment of our young men. They corrupt not only the hired players, but also the entire student body who learn from their elders the cynical, immoral doctrine that one must win at all costs.

A by-product of this doctrine, the necessity for big money, leads naturally to betting and to the shocking episode of the widespread bribery of basketball players in New York. I find it difficult to blame the players. They are but following a logical sequence of influences, beginning with the corruption of the sport at its source by pressure from the alumni.

An admirable statement—as far as it goes. But what reason is there for assuming that this "logical sequence of influences" begins with the alumni? Are they the source of original sin? Or are they rather a privileged group which acts as a sensitive conductor of the fundamental pressures generated by the system in which they live?

What are we to say of the revelations of the Senate Crime Committee under the chairmanship of Senator Kefauver? One thing we have to say, of course, is that the only really new thing about them is that they were broadcast on television. The tie-up between crime and politics in this country dates back to the rapid urbanization of the population in the nineteenth century. The Kefauver Committee is only telling part of a story that has been told many times before, most fully and most effectively by Lincoln Steffens and the other muckrakers nearly fifty years ago. If revelations of corruption and criminal influence in municipal politics come as a surprise to some Americans it is only because today we have no muckrakers and few crusading newspapers to tell the story to the public.

Just because the revelations of the Kefauver Committee are "old hat," however, does not mean that they are unimportant. They are

important—provided only that their meaning is properly understood. They demonstrate, for all who care to see, certain basic truths: First, that under our system any and every line of activity that yields a profit will be developed roughly in proportion to its profitability and quite regardless of whether it is legal or not. And second, that since illegal lines of business—organized crime—require special privileges and protection, they *must* always and everywhere be deeply involved in politics. Under capitalism, crime and politics are as closely linked as Siamese twins—the monstrous progeny of the hunt for private profits.

Was this fact not implicitly recognized by the “stars” of the New York hearings, Senator Tobey and former Mayor O’Dwyer? Listen to the following colloquy:

Senator Tobey—A funny thing what magnetism that man [Frank Costello] had. How can you analyze it? You look him over, you wouldn’t mark him except pretty near minus zero. But what is there? What is the attraction? What has he got? What kind of appeal does he have? What is it?

Mr. O’Dwyer—It doesn’t matter whether it is a banker, a businessman, or a gangster, his pocketbook is always attractive.

Senator Tobey—I quite agree, and that is a sad commentary, isn’t it, on modern life today?

Mr. O’Dwyer—Yes, sir.

But what is it, gentlemen, that determines the quality of “modern life today”? Isn’t it precisely the dominance of the pocketbook over all the aims and values and activities of social life? And isn’t that the very essence of capitalism, of the wonderful system of “free enterprise” which is being touted all over the world (of course with the support of Messrs. Tobey and O’Dwyer) as the miracle of America and the savior of the world?

But enough!

The record is sufficiently plain, and certainly not only to radicals. Senator Fulbright, in the previously quoted speech to the Senate, spoke of “the moral deterioration which is so evident to all,” and he was hardly exaggerating. Talk to people in all walks of life—in places of work, on buses and trains, in offices, at social gatherings—and you will find a well-nigh universal awareness of the greed and corruption and hypocrisy which permeate our national life today.

The question is: What shall we do about it?

Senator Fulbright, for one, is at a loss to answer. “I confess that I do not know what should be done,” he told his fellow senators. And so he proposed—a commission! And what would this commission do? Why, it would “consider the problem of ethical

standards of conduct in public affairs." Did ever the mountain labor and bring forth a tinier mouse?

No, Senator, your commission won't accomplish anything, and we can prove it on the basis of your own arguments. You yourself recognize that the problem is not one of new laws:

Much of the evil of the world is beyond the reach of the law. The law cannot prevent gossip. It cannot prevent men from bearing false witness against their neighbors. It cannot restrain men from avarice and gluttony. It cannot restrain a man from betraying his friend. In short, it cannot prevent much of the evil to which men are, unfortunately, too prone.

The problem for you is much deeper than that of devising new laws. It is nothing less than that of reforming the people who run our society, the people who in the final analysis set the standards of public and private life alike, and who are therefore the source of corruption. Here is what you yourself said about this, Senator:

Who is more at fault, the bribed or the bribers? The bribed have been false to their oaths and a betrayer of their trust. But they are often relatively simple men—men of small fortune or no fortune at all—and they weaken before the temptations held out to them by the unscrupulous.

Who are the bribers? They are often men who walk the earth lordly and secure, members of good families, respected figures in their communities; graduates of universities. They are, in short, of the privileged minority, and I submit that it is not unreasonable to ask of them that high standard of conduct which their training ought to have engendered. . . . Is it too much to ask of them, the favored few of our country, that they behave with simple honesty; with that honesty which looks, not to the letter of the law, but to its spirit?

You don't realize it, of course, but you are describing the American ruling class, and you are saying that it is the source of "the moral degeneration which is so evident to all." You are right, and the best that your commission could do would be to elaborate on the same theme, ending finally by preaching morals to the immoral.

All of history shows the futility of that course. Ruling classes are motivated by class interests, not by morality. Eventually, indeed, they mold their whole conception of morality to fit the requirements of their interests. That process is going on right now, Senator. How else can we explain your own lament that

one of the most disturbing aspects of this problem of ethical conduct is the revelation that among so many influential people, morality has become identical with legality. We are certainly in a tragic plight if the acceptable standard by which we measure

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the integrity of a man in public office is that he keep within the letter of the law.

This change in moral standards is worth pondering over. Haven't even your ideas of morality been changing in recent years, Senator? Stop and think for a moment. What were your reactions when Hitler sent his airmen to wipe out the little Spanish town of Guernica? What did you think when he ordered the obliteration of the Czech village of Lidice? If you were like most of your countrymen, you found in these acts proof of the utter depravity of Nazism, a convincing reason why there could be no compromise with fascism in any of its forms. In the March issue of MR we reproduced newspaper reports of comparable events in Korea—of "a little hamlet north of Anyang" hit by a napalm raid "and nowhere in the village have they buried the dead because there is nobody left to do so"; of the village of Tuom-ni, "obliterated" by "tanks, planes, and artillery" in reprisal for the ambushing of an advance patrol. These were not the acts of the North Koreans or the Chinese, Senator; they were the acts of Americans, and they were as deliberate as anything Hitler ever did. We have not seen any reports that you were among those raising your voice in protest. Can it be that what was immoral when Germans did it is moral when Americans do it? Or have your standards of morality been undergoing subtle changes, unbeknownst even to yourself?

But don't misunderstand us, Senator. We do not presume to preach morals to you; we merely tell you that you and your commission will get nowhere by preaching morals to the American ruling class. The American ruling class is the creation of a system which bestows its rewards on those who manage by hook or by crook to get rich. In the long run its members will adjust their ideas of morality to the exigencies of that system. Already its defense justifies any kind of killing—today with high explosives and napalm, tomorrow with atom bombs and deadly man-made plagues. Why should it be less moral to lie and bribe and steal and brutalize the minds and spirits of men?

If preaching morals won't help us, what will?

There is only one answer. The whole rotten system of capitalism, which subordinates everything to the private accumulation of wealth, must be scrapped; and in its place we must build a system in which public service becomes the normal, indeed the *necessary*, way of life and not the aberration of a few quixotic altruists. That means that private property in the means of production must be replaced by public property, that men must be valued not according to what they can wrest from society but according to what they contribute to society, that the anarchy and waste of private enterprise must give

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way to orderly planning in the interests of the whole community.

In a word, that means socialism.

We founded *Monthly Review* just two years ago this month in order to further the cause of socialism in the United States. Everything that has happened since has convinced us that we were right then, and that the job becomes more important with every day that passes.

Some people tell us that we are impractical, that the American people are not ready for socialism.

Well, and what should we conclude from that?

That the American people should be told only what we think they are ready for?

Or that the American people should be *made ready* for socialism, that they should be told the truth—that *socialism is the only answer and the sooner they are ready for socialism the better not only for themselves and their children but for all mankind.*

(April 15, 1951)

The gospel left behind by Jay Gould is doing giant work in our days. Its message is "Get money. Get it quickly. Get it in abundance. Get it dishonestly, if you can, honestly, if you must."

—Mark Twain (1906).

For twenty-five hundred years, people have been treating the problem of selfishness vs. social-mindedness as if it were purely theoretical. And they have been reaching no answers. They have failed. They have failed, because the problem is not in fact theoretical but practical. Its solution lies not in the construction of new ethical philosophies but in the creation of a new society.

—Barrows Dunham, *Man Against Myth*

A small force, if it never lets up, will accumulate effects more considerable than those of much greater forces if these work inconsistently. The ceaseless whisper of the more permanent ideals, the steady tug of truth and justice, give them but time, must warp the world in their direction.

—William James

THE AMERICAN RULING CLASS

BY PAUL M. SWEETZ

PART I

One MR reader, a graduate student of sociology at one of our larger universities, writes to the editors that "in the December and January issues your editorials used the term 'ruling class' no less than 18 times." He thinks that "by using this term so repetitiously you lay yourselves open to the serious accusation of surface-scratching analysis only." Don't we, he asks, owe MR readers "a probing analysis of a concept that is so complex and crucial"?

It would be easy to answer that the concept of the ruling class is well established in Marxian theory and that we are merely trying to apply the ideas and methods of Marxism to the analysis of the current American scene. But our correspondent would probably not be satisfied. He would hardly deny the relevance of Marxian theory, but he might say that after all Marx wrote a century ago, that he never made a special study of the American ruling class even of his own day, and that in any case the free and easy use of theoretical abstractions can be very dangerous. Wouldn't it be better to drop the appeal to authority and tell MR readers what we mean by the "ruling class" in terms that will permit them to judge for themselves whether our usage is justified?

The challenge seems an eminently fair one, and in this article I shall attempt to meet it.

First, however, let me enter a disclaimer. I couldn't give complete answers even if I wanted to. "The American ruling class" is a big subject. An exhaustive study of it would involve a full-dress analysis of the past and present of American society as a whole. That is a job not for an individual or even a small group of individuals; it is a job for all American social scientists working together and over a long period of time. But unfortunately, American social scientists, with but a few exceptions, are not interested in studying the ruling class; on the contrary, this is a "sensitive" subject which they avoid like the plague. The result is that relatively little valuable work has been done on the ruling class. Some day the American Left will no doubt make good this deficiency, but in the meanwhile there's no use pretending it doesn't exist. In the course of writing this article,

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I have become even more acutely conscious of it than I was at the outset.

This doesn't mean that American social scientists have done no work at all on the subject of class. The founders of American sociology—men like Lester Ward and William Graham Sumner—were very much interested in classes and their role in American society and wrote a surprisingly large amount on the subject. And in recent years, sociologists and social anthropologists have made a considerable number of field studies of American communities, studies in which problems of social stratification have played a prominent part.

These field studies (of which the Lynds' *Middletown* was one of the first and also one of the best examples) contain a great deal of useful information, but they all suffer from one fatal defect from our present point of view: they are confined to single communities and have almost nothing to say about social classes on a nation-wide scale. Contemporary sociologists and social anthropologists seem, almost as if by common agreement, to have decided that national social classes are not a proper subject of investigation.

The American Left, of course, does not share this view; in fact, it has long been very much alive to the existence and importance of a national ruling class. And left-wing writers have contributed many studies which throw valuable light on the subject—such works as Harvey O'Connor's *Mellon's Millions* and *The Guggenheims*, Anna Rochester's *Rulers of America*, and Ferdinand Lundberg's *America's Sixty Families*. But these left-wing works have been for the most part factual studies of particular aspects or elements of the ruling class. Generalizations about the ruling class as a whole have tended to run in terms of an oversimplified theory of Wall Street control of the country. This theory has many merits, especially for mass propaganda purposes, but it can hardly be considered an adequate substitute for a scientific analysis of the structure of the American ruling class.

General Characteristics of Social Classes

As an initial step it will be valuable to review the general characteristics of social classes, or in other words to establish the main outlines of a usable theory of social class.

The first thing to be stressed is that social classes are real living social entities; they are not artificial creations of the social scientist. This can best be explained by an illustration. Suppose a social scientist is analyzing a given population. He can divide it into "classes" by dozens of different criteria: for example, by height, by weight, and by color of hair. Each system of classification will yield

different results. One person in the six-foot class will be in the 200-pound class and in the brown-hair class; another will be in the 150-pound class and the blonde-hair class. By choosing his criteria appropriately the social scientist can thus divide the population up in all sorts of different ways, and any given division is his own artificial creation which may not matter at all to the people themselves. It is not so with social classes. The members of the population are keenly aware of the existence of social classes, of their belonging to one, of their desires to belong (or to avoid belonging) to another. If the social scientist wants to investigate social classes he has to take these facts as his starting point, and any attempt to impose artificial criteria of class membership will only result in confusion and failure. In other words, social classes are obstinate facts and not mere logical categories.

Recognition of this is the beginning of any attempt to deal seriously with social classes. In the past, American social scientists have been all too ready to deny the reality of social classes, to assume that they exist only in the mind of the observer. Fortunately, however, this is becoming less and less frequent. One great merit of recent sociological field work is that it has shown conclusively that America is a class society and that the American people know it is a class society. (In this connection, the best-known work is that of Lloyd Warner and his various associates. It is conveniently summarized in Warner, Meeker, and Eels, *Social Class in America* (1949), Chapter 1. The reader should be warned, however, that this book does not live up to its title: it is about social classes in individual communities and has only a limited usefulness from the point of view of the problems analyzed in this article.)

The fundamental unit of class membership is the family and not the individual. The proof of this is simply that every one is born into a certain class, the class to which his family belongs. The basic test of whether two families belong to the same class or not is the freedom with which they intermarry (either actually or potentially).

Families and their mutual relations are thus the stuff of a class system. But this does not exclude individuals from a crucially important role in the functioning of the system. Generally speaking, it is the activity (or lack of activity) of an individual which is responsible for the rise or fall of a family in the class pyramid. The familiar American success story illustrates the process: the lower-class lad who marries at his own social level, then achieves wealth and by so doing establishes his children in the upper reaches of the social hierarchy. But the process works both ways; there is also the man who loses his fortune and thereby plunges his family to the bottom of the social ladder. It should be noted that in nearly all cases the in-

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dividual himself does not succeed in making a complete shift from one class to the other. The *nouveau riche* is never fully accepted in his new social environment; and the man who loses his position never fully accepts his new environment. It is only the families that in each case, and in the course of time, make the adjustment.

A social class, then, is made up of freely intermarrying families. But what is it that determines how many classes there are and where the dividing lines are drawn? Generally speaking, the answer is obvious (and is borne out by all empirical investigations): the property system plays this key role. The upper classes are the property-owning classes; the lower classes are the propertyless classes. This statement is purposely general in its formulation. The number of classes and their relations to each other differ in different systems. For example, there may be several upper classes based on different kinds as well as on different amounts of property. We shall have to examine the American case more specifically below.

But before we do this, we must note other things which hold pretty generally for all classes and class systems.

It would be a mistake to think of a class as perfectly homogeneous internally and sharply marked off from other classes. Actually, there is variety within the class; and one class sometimes shades off very gradually and almost imperceptibly into another. We must therefore think of a class as being made up of a core surrounded by fringes which are in varying degrees attached to the core. A fringe may be more or less stable and have a well-defined function in relation to the class as a whole, or it may be temporary and accidental. Moreover, we must not think of all the class members (in either the family or the individual sense) as playing the same role in the class. Some are active, some passive; some leaders, some followers; and so on. Here we touch upon all the complex questions of class organization, cohesion, effectiveness, and the like. And finally, we must not imagine that all members of a class think and behave exactly alike. There are differences here too, though clearly the values and behavior norms of the class set fairly definite limits to the extent of these differences. A person who deviates too far from what the class considers acceptable is, so to speak, expelled from the class and is thenceforth treated as a renegade or deserter (the common use of the expression "traitor to his class" is symptomatic—and significant—in this connection).

In all these respects, of course, there is wide variation between different classes and class systems. Some classes are relatively homogeneous, well-defined, effectively organized, and to a high degree class-conscious. Others are loosely-knit, amorphous, lacking in organization, and hardly at all class-conscious. Further, some classes in

the course of their life histories pass through different stages, in the course of which all these variables undergo more or less thorough changes. These are all problems to be investigated in the particular case; there are no general answers valid for all times and places.

One more point has to be noted before we turn to the American case. There is no such thing as a completely closed class system. All systems of which we have historical record display inter-class mobility, both upwards and downwards. In some systems, however, mobility is difficult and slow; in others it is easy and rapid. A social class can be compared to a hotel which always has guests, some of whom are permanent residents and some transients. In a relatively static system, the average sojourn is long; arrivals and departures are infrequent, and the proportion of permanent residents is high. In a dynamic system, guests come and go all the time; the hotel is always full but always with new people who have only recently arrived and, except in a few cases, will soon depart.

The American Class System

The United States is a capitalist society, the purest capitalist society that ever existed. It has no feudal hangovers to complicate the class system. Independent producers (working with their own means of production but without hired labor) there are, but both economically and socially they constitute a relatively unimportant feature of the American system. What do we expect the class structure of such a pure capitalist society to be?

Clearly, the two decisive classes are defined by the very nature of capitalism: the owners of the means of production (the capitalist class), and the wage laborers who set the means of production in motion (the working class). There is no doubt about the existence or importance of these two classes in America. Taken together they can be said to constitute the foundation of the American class system.

The foundation of a building, however, is not the whole building; nor does the American economic system contain only capitalists and workers. For one thing, as we have already noted, there are independent producers (artisans and small farmers), and to these we should add small shopkeepers and providers of services (for example, the proprietors of local gas stations). These people make up the lower-middle class, or *petite bourgeoisie*, in the original sense of the term. For another thing, there are a variety of types which stand somewhere between the capitalists and the workers and cannot easily be classified with either: government and business bureaucrats, professionals, teachers, journalists, advertising men, and so on. These are often, and not inappropriately, called the new middle classes—

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"new" because of their spectacular growth, both absolutely and relatively to other classes, in the last 75 years or so. Finally, there are what are usually called declassed elements—bums, gamblers, thugs, prostitutes, and the like—who are not recognized in the official statistics but who nevertheless play an important role in capitalist society, especially in its political life.

Viewing the matter from a primarily economic angle, then, we could say that the American class structure consists of capitalists, lower-middle class in the classical sense, new middle classes, workers, and declassed elements. There is no doubt, however, that this is not a strictly accurate description of the actual living social classes which we observe about us. If we apply the criterion of intermarriageability as a test of social class membership, we shall often find that people who from an economic standpoint belong to the new middle classes are actually on the same social level as the larger capitalists; that smaller capitalists are socially indistinguishable from a large proportion of the new middle classes; and that the working class includes without very much social distinction those who perform certain generally comparable kinds of labor, whether it be with their own means of production or with means of production belonging to others.

These considerations lead us to the following conclusion: The social classes which we observe about us are not *identical* with the economic classes of capitalist society. They are rather *modifications* of the latter. This is, I believe, an important principle. If we keep it firmly in mind we shall be able to appreciate the decisive role of the economic factor in the structure and behavior of social classes while at the same time avoiding an overmechanical (and hence false) economic determinism.

How shall we describe the actual social-class structure of America? This is partly a matter of fact and partly a matter of convention, and on neither score is there anything that could be called general agreement among students of American society. Warner and associates, for example, say that in a typical American community there are exactly six classes to which they give the names upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower, and lower-lower. There are a number of objections to this scheme, however. It is based on studies of small cities; the dividing lines are largely arbitrary; and the labels suggest that the only important thing about classes is their position in relation to other classes. Warner and associates admit that there are some communities which lack one or more of the six classes they believe they found in "Jonesville" and "Yankee City"; and one hesitates to speculate on how many classes they might plausibly claim to find, by using essentially the same

methods, in a really big city. Their scheme, in other words, while representing a serious attempt to cope with the problem, is unsatisfactory. Its inadequacy is particularly obvious when we attempt to pass beyond the individual community and deal with social classes on a national scale.

What we need is a scheme which both highlights the fundamental economic conditioning of the social-class system and at the same time is flexible enough to encompass the anomalies and irregularities which actually characterize it.

The starting point must surely be the recognition that two social classes, at bottom shaped by the very nature of capitalism, determine the form and content of the system as a whole. I prefer to call these classes the ruling class and the working class. The core of the ruling class is made up of big capitalists (or, more generally, big property-owners, though the distinction is not very important since most large aggregates of property have the form of capital in this country today). There are numerous fringes to the ruling class, including smaller property-owners, government and business executives (insofar as they are not big owners in their own right), professionals, and so on: we shall have more to say on this subject later. The core of the working class is made up of wage laborers who have no productive property of their own. Here again there are fringes, including especially, independent craftsmen and petty traders.

The fringes of the ruling class do not reach to the fringes of the working class. Between the two there is a wide social space which is occupied by what we can hardly avoid calling the middle class. We should not forget, however, that the middle class is much more heterogeneous than either the ruling class or the working class. It has no solid core, and it shades off irregularly (and differently in different localities) into the fringes of the class above it and the class below it. Indeed we might say that the middle class consists of a collection of fringes, and that its social cohesion is largely due to the existence in all of its elements of a desire to be in the ruling class above it and to avoid being in the working class below it.

This generalized description of the social-class structure seems to me to have many merits and no fatal defects. The terminology calls attention to the chief functions of the basic classes and indicates clearly enough the relative positions of the three classes in the social hierarchy. More important, the use of the fringe concept enables us to face frankly the *fact* that the dividing lines in American society are not sharply drawn, and that even the borderlands are irregular and unstable. This fact is often seized upon to "prove" that there are *no* classes in America. It cannot be banished or hidden by the use of an elaborate multi-class scheme like that of Warner

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and associates, for the simple reason that such a scheme, however well it may seem to apply to some situations, breaks down when applied to others. What we must have is a scheme which takes full account of the fact in question without at the same time obscuring the fundamental outlines and character of the class system itself.

I shall next try to show that, at least as concerns the ruling class, the scheme proposed above does satisfy these requirements.

(To be continued)

"FREE ENTERPRISE" DEPARTMENT

The former convent of the Sisters of Mercy, which has stood on Madison Avenue between 81st and 82nd Streets since 1885, is being razed to make way for new Public School 6. . . .

The property on which the convent stands was leased by the city to the sisterhood in 1866. . . .

In 1944 the Roman Catholic Archdiocese obtained ownership of the Madison Avenue site from the city for \$275,000. . . . Last year the city acquired title to the property for \$1,250,000. . . .

—*New York Times*, January 31, 1951

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Excerpt from the printed program of the annual conference of the Florida Tuberculosis and Health Association, April 5-6, 1951, at West Palm Beach:

BANQUETS

Subject: The Voluntary Agency—Democracy in Action

7:30 P.M. White: George Washington Hotel
Dewey Knight, presiding
Herman L. Frick, Ph.D., speaker

8:00 P.M. Negro: Roosevelt High School
Edgar L. Barker, presiding
Richard V. Moore, speaker

FREEDOM UNDER SOCIALISM: SUMMARY AND COMMENT

BY ARTHUR K. DAVIS

In winning people to socialism, no issue is more crucial than that of freedom under socialism. The discussion in recent issues of MR clearly poses the problem and takes us far toward a valid solution. Let us summarize the essential points made by Messrs. Kaminsky, O'Sheel, and Bachrach, and by the editors of MR.

Kaminsky's very capable lead-off article (November, 1950) starts with the contrast between the apparent freedom of Americans to oppose their government and the evident absence of that freedom in socialist countries. If socialism negates freedom, what claim can it have to anyone's loyalty?

The solution of this perennial dilemma is Kaminsky's basic theme: *every social system develops its own version of freedom*. He explicitly rejects the liberal conception of freedom as a natural right, an abstract liberty to do and think as one pleases quite apart from any social order. He equates this "abstract freedom" with the "civil and individual rights" specific to capitalism. Socialist freedom must differ from capitalist freedom, which indeed socialism negates by its revolutionary reordering of society. During the transition, people who cling to capitalist freedom will naturally consider the new order tyrannical, and some of them will be coerced. But eventually recognition of the benefits of socialist discipline will prevail, chiefly through education, as the dissenters are drawn willy-nilly into the forward flow of socialist life. And once acclimated, people will for the most part carry out their socialist duties spontaneously, thus minimizing the need for external authority. Kaminsky's final point denies the validity of what he calls "hodge-podge" socialism which seeks to retain the "good" aspects of capitalism while getting rid of the "bad." Capitalism must be accepted or rejected in its entirety.

In their comment (December, 1950) the editors of MR accept the central Kaminsky thesis that socialist freedom differs from capitalist freedom, and that the transition, while primarily an educational process, is in part coercive. But, they ask, how coercive? Why can't socialism, once consolidated, incorporate at least some bourgeois

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civil liberties and operate according to the canons of "due process of law?" Isn't Kaminsky unduly inclined to take the socialism of the USSR and eastern Europe as a model for American socialism regardless of significant differences in conditions and background?

To this query Kaminsky responds (February, 1951) that socialist freedom is based on collective ownership of the means of production with maximum central planning and control, whereas bourgeois freedom presupposes a private-enterprise economy with minimum governmental activity. Trying to combine the two implies eating one's cake and having it too.

Like the editors, O'Sheel (February, 1951) endorses the main Kaminsky thesis but enters a qualification concerning the extent of the differences between capitalist and socialist freedoms. That there will be some—perhaps considerable—carryover of capitalist liberties into the socialist era he affirms on three grounds: (1) revolutionary rigor is not permanent; (2) socialist society will not be entirely new but will preserve important elements of capitalist social structure; (3) man's unique biological traits of reasoning and inventing for progress require free communication. Societies restricting communication (civil rights) dangerously hamstringing themselves in the competition for progress, and even if some are so shortsighted as to try it, "human nature will break through." (We must discard O'Sheel's biological frame of reference as untenable. But if we read "social" for "biological," the essential idea remains unaffected.)

O'Sheel also takes issue with two of Kaminsky's subsidiary points: that Americans can freely oppose their government, and that under socialism there will be no freedom to err. The latter he attacks as a precise parallel to the "pretensions [to infallibility] by which the shamans of all religions have cowed the masses."

Kaminsky's reply (February, 1951) cites the publication of MR as proof that Americans can oppose not only their government but also their social system. The charge of religious fanaticism he accepts: every era has its basic principles and whoever deviates must pay the price. (But does this not confirm the O'Sheel contention that we cannot *freely* oppose our social system?) On the main question whether there will be a cultural carryover from capitalism to socialism and hence at least a partial survival of bourgeois freedom in socialist society, Kaminsky yields ground: "Socialism, like capitalism before it, marks a step in the perfection of the social order."

Thus far the discussion has merely qualified the original Kaminsky thesis. Bachrach, however, entirely rejects it (February, 1951). Adhering to the abstract definition of freedom, he declares that no socialism is worthwhile unless it preserves bourgeois civil liberties.

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This, he continues, the USSR has signally failed to do. If we do not denounce the Soviet denial of these liberties, how can we logically attack the Vatican's intolerance? And since, according to Bachrach, Marxism is not an exact science and hence not infallible, all the more reason for preserving bourgeois civil rights to facilitate criticism and change of official dogma. Soviet gains, the reality of which Bachrach does not deny, cannot compensate for the absence of freedom in Russia.

Kaminsky responds (February, 1951) that Bachrach's anti-Soviet axe-grinding completely begs the question of the nature of socialist freedom, that Bachrach is really interested in maintaining bourgeois freedom, not in defining or attaining socialism.

* * *

It seems to me that Kaminsky's central thesis, as modified by the editors and by O'Sheel, is fundamentally sound. Certain points deserve sharpening, however, and some additional issues need consideration.

We must clearly distinguish between the general (formal) prerequisites of freedom and the specific social institutions which give freedom its substance in time and place. The ideals and institutions of each social era provide the *content* of freedom. The discussion summarized in the previous section focused exclusively on the content of freedom. In the present section we shall introduce the formal aspect of freedom, returning in the next section to specific versions of freedom.

The formal aspect of freedom refers to those broad functions which every social order must effectively fulfill in order to operate as a reasonably stable going concern. In this sense, freedom is a universal which each epoch realizes in varying degree and through the medium of different specific institutions. For the general functions of a social system can be met by various concrete social structures, depending of course on existing conditions.

Before we get into our subject more deeply, we must rid ourselves once and for all of the naive notion that freedom means the right to do "anything." Kaminsky calls this the liberal or abstract idea of freedom, and he rightly rejects it. Taken at face value, it is anti-social. A society in which any one could literally do anything would be no society at all, but anarchy—the absence of order. Thus defined as random action, anarchy makes either for the war of each against all, or for apathy—both of which negate social life.

Yet the liberal idea of freedom has too much tenacity and too many adherents to be so easily disposed of. If its explicit formulation—the right to do anything—reduces to an absurdity, what is its under-

lying substance? Clearly, it can only be the specific freedom of bourgeois society universalized into a mythical absolute as one facet of capitalism's egocentric illusion of its own superiority over other social orders. In the stable phase of capitalism, of course, many individuals feel they *can* do "anything." This really means that they can successfully realize a high proportion of the goals which capitalism teaches people to seek. It means that conflicting values simply do not occur to enough people to upset the prevailing impression of freedom.

The truth is that every society trains its members to seek certain socially approved goals by acceptable means. If those goals are compatible—that is, if the society is well integrated and efficiently organized—then the members *feel* free. They are doing what they want to do—but they learn from growing up and living in their own society what to desire and what to shun. Since behavior patterns differ from one society to another, it follows that what constitutes freedom varies likewise. This is the validation of the Kaminsky thesis that every social order develops its own version of freedom. In the liberal idea of freedom, then, we see bourgeois freedom dressed up as an absolute.

It is of the utmost importance to emphasize that no specific version (content) of freedom has any standing outside its own social setting. But presenting a specific freedom as an absolute, universally valid, is not merely a rank violation of truth and logic. Far more significant from our present point of view is the fact that the ideology of absolute freedom operates to preserve the existing social order. For instance, whoever regards American freedom today as an absolute value, perhaps imperfectly realized but essentially changeless as an ideal, must for this very reason accept capitalism, since in reality that freedom is produced by capitalist society. He will necessarily view any other version of freedom as tyranny; he will react spontaneously against any other social order. In a showdown he is in the capitalist camp, and that is what counts. He may criticize certain features of capitalism—usually its domestic aspects—but ultimately he is bound to its chariot by his commitment to what is inseparable from capitalism. Once bourgeois freedom has been successfully portrayed as absolute freedom, anti-capitalist sentiment is diverted automatically into such harmless channels as paper utopias and verbal reformism which, to the extent that they involve more than mere words, look essentially to the perfection of capitalism. The very possibility of working for a non-capitalist social order is precluded by defining freedom as an absolute. This is the snare into which Bachrach has fallen, along with the cohorts of American reformers—the Republocrat "liberals," the Norman Thomas Socialist Party, the shallow

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prattlers of the "vital center." Let us call it the *squirrel cage fallacy*—because its unsuspecting victims, like the caged squirrel on his wheel, go blithely through the motions of progress but get nowhere.

A prerequisite of a vital socialist movement in America is breaking the intellectual bondage of the myth of absolute freedom, and recognizing that freedom is a house of many mansions, one for every social order. Once they are clear on this fundamental principle, some of the people now in the reformist wing of the capitalist camp will gain the insight and courage to join in the quest for genuine socialism.

Let us now return to the formal or universal aspect of freedom. Given any social system, what are the general prerequisites of freedom?

To survive, every society must perform certain functions. It must reproduce new members, teach them to carry on its traditions, meet the problem of social change, produce and distribute goods, keep aggression within bounds, and so on. *How* these functions are carried out varies widely. But whatever its specific nature, a given social order is stable to the degree that (1) its social structure is harmoniously integrated; (2) it effectively trains new members; (3) it successfully adapts itself to changing conditions, internal and external; (4) it harnesses the frustration of its members—for no society is perfectly integrated.

Insofar as these conditions are realized, the members of a society will *feel* free and will *consider themselves free*, whether they are African nomads or American capitalists or Russian Communists. In its formal aspect—the only one which can be defined in terms valid for any social system—freedom is a state of mind, a subjective feeling of well-being resulting from the objective fact of living in an effectively functioning society. In this sense "freedom" is to any social order as "health" is to any biological organism. Both terms refer to the state of a going system; neither can be identified with any particular part of the whole.

From the definition of formal freedom three conclusions follow. *First*, the extent of freedom under socialism depends on how well a socialist order can meet the problems inherent in modern industrial society. On theoretical grounds alone we can recognize that the intense specialization of industrialism requires central planning and control to coordinate the economic system. To larger proportions of the people than under any other system, socialism offers the potentiality of escaping from scarcity and exploitation. But the final proof is life itself. That socialism "works" is clear from the Russian case, which we may cite as compelling evidence because socialism there became a going concern despite a minimum of advantages and a

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maximum of obstacles. Under the acid test of massive invasion by a Nazi Germany in control of the resources and manpower of most of Europe, the Soviet order retained the intense loyalty of the great majority of its citizens and mustered the strength to defeat the attack. This should dispose of the "Slave State" myth. Not that all Russians were free or felt free. In a revolutionary transition era this could not be true. But the people were clearly sufficiently convinced by past and prospective progress that they were on the right track to remain intensely loyal. What capitalist-trained people think of the Soviet order is largely irrelevant for deciding how much freedom the Russians enjoy. What really matters is what the Soviet citizens themselves think.

Second, socialist freedom differs in content—that is, in its specific rights and duties—from capitalist freedom, because the two social orders are different. But they do not differ throughout. I shall try to show later that we must expect considerable carryover of capitalist behavior patterns (including much of the present substance of "due process" norms) into socialism. In principle, however, we need to underline Kaminsky's strictures against the hodge-podge variety of socialism, which promises the "good" aspects of both capitalism and socialism with the evils of neither. Every system, including socialism, has features that are evil *by its own standards*, since no society can be perfectly integrated. We must remember, too, that how we feel *now* about various actual or prospective socialist institutions is no indication of how we will feel about them after socialism has been fully realized in America. Confusing present with future attitudes is a short cut to the squirrel cage fallacy.

Third, during the transition to socialism freedom will be reduced in rough proportion to such factors as the speed of the transformation, the hostility of the international environment, and the amount of disorganization in the society at the start of the transition. A transition era is unstable, especially if it takes the form of a revolution, which can perhaps be best defined as very rapid and pervasive change in a social system. The old ways no longer function effectively; new ones are not yet worked out. Some of our most ingrained and hard-learned habits and attitudes are abruptly upset by the impact of fast-changing social conditions. To the strain which comes from facing both ways at once there are various responses. Many people reject both competing societies and relapse into apathy. Others latch onto utopian panaceas: in the new Jerusalem are many prophets. Still others over-react and attempt to suppress by force one or the other pattern. The net result is almost sure to be intensified frustration, which negates our four conditions of stability and therefore decreases freedom.

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A new social order, once built, is not burdensome if it meets the four conditions, and there is every reason to believe that socialism does meet them. It is the transition which is painful. The sharp curtailing of freedom observable in socialist countries today is due mainly to the inevitable but temporary conditions of social change, not to the socialist system itself. Two facts, then, must be faced realistically: the potential rigors and decreased freedom of the transition, and the distinction between the unstable interim period and the stabilized socialist epoch.

Reviewing the universal aspect of freedom as a subjective feeling of well-being caused by living in any relatively well integrated society, some readers may be skeptical. By definition, whoever feels free is satisfied with the existing order. Since a majority of Germans supported Hitler, doesn't this make Nazi Germany a free society? Within limits, yes. *But freedom under fascism is inherently temporary, because fascism does not solve, but in the long run only intensifies, the problems of capitalism.* Nazism brought a relative freedom to most Germans, who could behave more as they wanted to than before. It also brought extreme oppression to sizable minorities of Germans. But what is most important is that the freedom of the Nazis to act as they wanted to was certain to lead them and everyone else into disaster. Ultimately, the necessary consequence of fascism is foreign imperialism and domestic catastrophe—the very negation of our four prerequisites of freedom.

Socialism, on the contrary, *can* resolve the tensions of capitalism and thus achieve a stable freedom. The degree to which socialist society is unfree—as we have already noted, every social order generates *some* frustration—is largely due to the necessity of preventing people from acting as they want to when what they want to do would be harmful and perhaps even fatal for the vast majority of the people concerned.

* * *

We now turn from the form to the content of freedom—from the universal aspects or prerequisites of freedom to the ideals and social institutions which give to freedom its specific meaning in a particular epoch. More precisely, we return to the questions raised in the first section about the concrete nature of freedom under socialism. Here we deal with freedom not as a state of social integration, but as a set of living values. Our main problem is the extent to which bourgeois freedom and toleration can be carried over into socialism. Kaminsky minimizes the possibility; O'Sheel and the editors take a less narrow view of the chances. The second case, I think, is the stronger.

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To demonstrate a carryover of capitalist freedom into socialism, it is necessary to show that some approved bourgeois values and behavior patterns are present and approved in socialist society, and that there are no insuperable obstacles to their realization.

The case for expecting the preservation of certain bourgeois freedoms in the era of *stabilized* socialism rests on the fact that capitalism and socialism are variants or successive forms of the same general social type—urban-industrial society. The history of modern times hinges on the post-medieval movement from the self-sufficient peasant community to large-scale industrialism. In the West, developed capitalism is now recognizable as a passing phase of the larger transition to socialism, since a mature industrial society clearly requires central planning and collective ownership of the means of production.

As the industrial order develops through capitalism into socialism, two aspects of social life that become increasingly prominent are bureaucracy and science. On them depends much of the continuity between bourgeois and socialist freedoms. Let us examine them in turn.

By "bureaucracy" we mean any large-scale hierarchy of specialized and coordinated offices, the basic unit of which—the "office"—is a set of impersonal systematized rules spelling out the rights and duties of the incumbent. Authority lies in the office, not in the person of the incumbent, whose powers and procedures tend to be explicitly defined, hence limited. Obedience is to the legal order, embodied in written files and precedents, rather than to the particular officeholder. *Bureaucracy in this sense is obviously the indispensable framework of the modern industrial world.* States, corporations, armies, and all other large-scale, sustained enterprises require the bureaucratic type of organization to attain the coordination necessary to carry on their work.

Now is it not true that the bureaucratic pattern, with its impersonality and its systematic procedures is the very essence of our contemporary principles of "due process" and "law over men"? Of course it is. To emphasize the organic relationship between bureaucracy and our rational legal system, we may note that the only stable non-bureaucratic type of authority is the highly personal, vaguely defined power of the local lord or elder in a small-scale, self-sufficient economy, where custom and the chief's whim are the main determinants of authority.

By centralizing and streamlining the wasteful hodge-podge of capitalist economic and political bureaucracies, socialism will greatly refine and extend "due process of law." Without a monolithic

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bureaucratic framework, social planning is impossible. Let us not be misled by the present unpopular connotations of the term "bureaucracy." They are temporary reflections of our frustration by the *transition* toward centralism.

The specific rights and duties of the citizen and job-holder will be partly redefined under socialism. But the legal order, once stabilized, will assure due process and the limitation of arbitrary power. Here is one major element of bourgeois freedom which socialism alone can bring to full flower.

Another is science. It is the cornerstone of any industrial order. Capitalism has made notable advances toward the mastery of nature and the solution of the age-old problem of scarcity. It remains for socialism to extend scientific mastery from nature to society, and to accomplish the final conquest of scarcity.

The feeling of freedom in the formal sense can be realized in *any* society, even the most primitive, provided it functions effectively enough to permit its members to achieve the goals society teaches them to seek. In the modern world the rise of science and industrialism has fostered among us the ideal of maximizing man's rational control of his own destiny. Hence attaining freedom in our time is impossible without the radical extension of science. Primitive and peasant societies according to this standard (though not necessarily by their own original standards, of course) have only a slight degree of freedom because of their rudimentary control over nature. Capitalism broadens the realm of freedom by notably extending our mastery over nature. Socialism further extends the area of freedom by bringing not only nature but also society under rational human guidance. We could in fact say that science is the key to socialist freedom, because freedom in our epoch requires the understanding of necessity—of the laws of nature and society, and how they may be harnessed to social purposes. On this all-important point see the brilliant passage from Engels' *Anti-Dühring* printed after this essay.

Closely related to the goal of control over nature and society is the striving for freedom in the positive sense of the realization of creative self- and social development. Despite its great advances over previous eras, capitalism wins these freedoms for no more than a favored minority. The socialism of the transition may do little better, especially if the transition is abrupt. But the ultimate stabilizing of the socialist order will greatly broaden freedom for the many. In the growth of leisure and security we have for the first time on a mass scale the possibility of offsetting the intense specialism and uncertainty of modern industrialism with a more balanced life pattern, admired since the Greeks but attained only occasionally by elite

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minorities. Marx clearly expressed the basic relation between leisure and freedom when he said that

freedom [in production] cannot consist of anything else but of the fact that . . . the associated producers regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power. . . . But it always remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human power which is its own end, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can flourish only upon that realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its fundamental premise. (*Capital*, III, 954.)

Socialism thus inherits many of its basic values from Hellenic and Renaissance humanism, from the rationalism of the Enlightenment, from the universalism of modern democratic ideals, and from science. The bureaucratic framework, greater control over human affairs, higher material standards of living, wider realization of the humanist ideal of balanced self-development—these major elements of socialist freedom are carried over from bourgeois, and to a certain extent even from pre-bourgeois, society. And not just carried over, but greatly developed. In a very real sense, as O'Sheel suggests, we may speak of socialism as fulfilling the promise of capitalism.

Still another significant carryover will be the chronic ferment that has long characterized the West. The tradition of primitive messianic Christianity with its immanent anti-institutional bent; the secularized utopianism of the eighteenth century and after; the inherent dynamism of modern science and the drive for "progress"—all have entered directly or indirectly into Marxism. Revolutionary goals, like "equality" and "fraternity" in 1789, are never completely realizable, but their catalytic role in producing social change is undeniable. The capitalist epoch has provided a long series of reform tendencies, great and small. What proves that socialism has a similarly dynamic quality is its projection of Communism as the next, "higher" stage of society. Ideals like the "classless society" and the "withering away of the State" may be currently unrealistic, but they guarantee ferment. The Russians, who consider themselves now in the stage of socialism, place the greatest emphasis on achieving Communism. Requirements of organizational stability will naturally harness socialist dynamism, just as they have restricted capitalist innovation, but they cannot eradicate what is built into Western social structure itself. Change is always a compromise between the real and the ideal.

Freedom in modern societies is not static. Its ideals and institutions change over time, and the degree to which those ideals are realized varies too. We can judge the freedom of a society only by the

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extent to which its *own* standards are *voluntarily* practiced. Coercion and freedom vary inversely. Judged by its own norms—say, the Bill of Rights and the philosophy of classical liberalism—capitalism is becoming less free. And by their own values, socialist societies still have a long road ahead to freedom, although in one or two of them a fair stretch has already been traversed.

Our next point concerns toleration. Can socialism match the undeniably great achievement of capitalism in tolerating nonconformity?

To compare toleration in socialist and capitalist societies we must take them in similar stages of stability. This we cannot yet do, since the existing socialist countries are still in the transition phase. Although the real Russian Revolution (the social reorganization represented by the Five Year Plans) got "over the hump" by the mid-thirties, final stabilization will take decades. Anti-Soviet diatribes like Bachrach's are therefore irrelevant. But we are not without some genuine insights.

We may expect considerable toleration from *mature* socialism for two reasons. The first is the stability of the post-transition era. No major contradictions in socialist states, beyond those associated with the reconstruction period, are yet in view. The second and more important reason is the complexity of urban-industrial life, with its flow of inventions and fads and its mobility of people and ideas, assuring a cosmopolitan atmosphere directly opposed to the intolerant conservatism found in the peasant world. Toleration has never flourished except in an urban setting. Socialism means an expansion of the industrialization and urbanization featured by capitalism.

But we cannot look for unlimited toleration. Nonconformity in any society must be restricted, or stability and perhaps the very possibility of social life are negated. We must distinguish between *verbal* and *organized* opposition to a social order. Self-confident integrated societies may afford wide scope to verbal criticism, but they react strongly against overt nonconformist activity. And under stress no social order tolerates even verbal opposition: witness the rising thought-control tendencies in America today. In its prime of life, capitalism showed unprecedented tolerance. Marx wrote unmolested for years in London; MR is freely published today. But the O'Sheel contention that capitalism tolerates mainly verbal rather than overt dissent is valid. American history is spattered with repressive sanctions (ostracism, economic and legal disabilities, coercion) against *active* dissenters like Abolitionists, Mormons, splinter parties, labor organizers, Communists.

In summary, there is every reason to expect not merely a carry-over of certain basic elements of capitalist freedom into mature

FREEDOM UNDER SOCIALISM

socialism, but the positive expansion of those elements. Other aspects of bourgeois freedom of course will be revised or removed. Central planning will remold, but not generally reduce, individualism. For the true bases of individualism are (1) a decreased scope for kinship-based factors like race, clan, nationality, and sex, which decide a person's life chances largely by the accidents of birth; (2) an increased scope for learned interests and activities, vocational and avocational. Developing during post-medieval times, individualism will be further broadened under socialism, as the rules of nature and society are progressively understood and harnessed.

* * *

Freedom has many facets. We have discussed them on two levels: freedom as a resultant of social integration, and freedom as a set of specific ideals. The two aspects meet in the famous slogan: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." In the one sense this expresses a leading goal of socialism, the achievement of which has been relegated to the next major epoch—Communism. But in another sense it epitomizes the condition of any integrated social system. For people acquire both their skills and their needs from growing up and living in a community. If the society functions effectively, needs and abilities roughly match each other to realize both the necessities of social life and the aspirations of freedom.

There remains one question, the most important of all, the question of war and peace. Capitalism has doomed its achievements, including its own version of freedom, through its growing dependence on war as the main support for an over-producing economy. War is no longer compatible with modern society; war and freedom today are mutually exclusive. Capitalism has irrevocably failed to solve the problem of war. What about socialism?

There are several reasons for believing in the basically peaceful character of socialism. (The problem of peace or war *between socialism and capitalism* is beyond the scope of this article: we are speaking of socialism after it has spread to the major peoples of the world.) In western nations today the dominant groups cannot maintain themselves and their way of life without embarking on a course that inevitably leads to war. Once this war-breeding condition has been changed, once the chief economies of the world are rationally planned and internationally coordinated, once the main populations have passed through the industrial revolution to a common and stabilized cultural pattern—then the roots of modern war should largely atrophy. Not until then will the dream of world government become practically realizable. The peaceful character of socialism, in other words, will then find institutional expression. In the meantime, to

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demand the form of world federation without the content of world socialism is simply to invite frustration.

When world socialism has finally been reached, the real potentialities of freedom under socialism will unfold in the flowering of a richer, better integrated, and more universal society than the world has known before.

We all declare for liberty; but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing. With some the word liberty may mean for each to do as he pleases with himself, and the product of his labor; while with others the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labor. Here are two, not only different, but incompatible things, called by the same name, liberty. And it follows that each of the things is, by the respective parties, called by two different and incompatible names—liberty and tyranny.

The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act, as the destroyer of liberty. . . . Plainly the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon the definition of the word liberty.

—Abraham Lincoln

For me the great western tradition of intellectual freedom is as precious as life itself. I could not breathe freely in a dictatorship, however much I might agree with its ultimate purposes; I distrust the state and despise the bureaucrat, but I do not propose to follow Pied Pipers whose concern for intellectual freedom only begins where there is a fighting chance for a poor oppressed people to achieve socialism. Where concern for liberty coincides only with danger to property it is strictly ersatz, and Americans who refused to follow the Liberty League at home should not be so gullible now as to follow the same crowd to disaster abroad.

—I. F. Stone, the *Daily Compass*, March 16, 1951

FREEDOM AND NECESSITY

BY FRIEDRICH ENGELS

Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity. To him, freedom is the appreciation of necessity. "Necessity is *blind only in so far as it is not understood.*" Freedom does not consist in the dream of independence of natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends.

This holds good in relation to both the laws of external nature and to those which govern the bodily and mental life of men themselves—two classes of laws which we can separate from each other at most only in thought but not in reality. Freedom of the will therefore means nothing but the capacity to make decisions with real knowledge of the subject. Therefore the *freer* a man's judgment is in relation to a definite question, with so much the greater *necessity* is the content of this judgment determined; while the uncertainty, founded on ignorance, which seems to make an arbitrary choice among many different and conflicting decisions, shows by this precisely that it is not free, that it is controlled by the very object it should itself control. Freedom therefore consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature which is founded on knowledge of natural necessity; it is therefore necessarily a product of historical development.

The first men who separated themselves from the animal kingdom were in all essentials as unfree as the animals themselves, but each step forward in civilization was a step towards freedom. On the threshold of human history stands the discovery that mechanical motion can be transformed into heat: the production of fire by friction; at the close of the development so far gone through stands the discovery that heat can be transformed into mechanical motion: the steam engine. And, in spite of the gigantic and liberating revolution in the social world which the steam engine is carrying through—and which is not yet half completed—it is beyond question that the generation of fire by friction was of even greater effectiveness for the liberation of mankind. For the generation of fire by friction gave

This passage is taken from Engels' famous work, Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (more commonly known as Anti-Dühring), International Publishers edition, pp. 130-131.

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man for the first time control over one of the forces of nature, and thereby separated him forever from the animal kingdom.

The steam engine will never bring about such a mighty leap forward in human development, however important it may seem in our eyes as representing all those immense productive forces dependent on it—forces which alone make possible a state of society in which there are no longer class distinctions or anxiety over the means of subsistence for the individual, and in which for the first time there can be talk of real human freedom and of an existence in harmony with the established laws of nature. But how young the whole of human history still is, and how ridiculous it would be to attempt to ascribe any absolute validity to our present views, is evident from the simple fact that all past history can be characterized as the history of the epoch from the practical discovery of the transformation of mechanical motion into heat up to that of the transformation of heat into mechanical motion.

WAR OR NEW FOREIGN POLICY

Without an evaluation of the merits and demerits of President Truman's foreign policy, I venture to predict (as a scholar) that it hardly has a chance to lead us to peace and its chances to bring us to a full-scale world war are practically certain.

Further on, if and when such a war explodes, it is likely to be as disastrous for us as for the opponent. Contrary to the President's statement, it will not save liberty, justice, democracy and free enterprise; instead it will surely destroy the existing remnants of these values. Apocalyptic death and destruction; irreparable waste of the best and young blood of the nations involved; vital, moral and mental deterioration; unprecedented total anarchy; irredeemable decay of the whole Western culture and society; and untold oceans of sorrow and suffering—such are the certain consequences of the full-scale third world war.

If we do not want these results, the existing foreign policy must be radically changed.

—Letter from Pitrim A. Sorokin, Harvard sociologist, to the *New York Times*, Jan. 16, 1951

(continued from inside front cover)

peal—and a Recommendation" appeared in last July's issue). Here is what he says:

Dear Friend:—I am sending you a copy of the magazine *Monthly Review*, frankly in the hope that you will become a subscriber. Above all else in the publishing field, in the present hour of crisis, America needs a journal of political analysis that is truly independent of all parties and pressure groups; and at the same time, one that does not skim over the surface hoping to offend as few subscribers as possible, but instead really comes to grips with the basic problems that plague our society. I have taken MR since its inception. All twenty-three issues so far have been excellent, most of them outstanding. Needless to say, a magazine that does not cater to Big Business, or the political beliefs of Big Business and has moreover no organizational backing is not a money-making affair. That's one selfish reason why I am urging you and others to join MR's growing family: I would be lost without it.

We are convinced that a letter like this sent to friends, *along with a sample copy of MR*, will advertise the magazine, spread its influence, and bring in subscribers. In fact, there is no better way. For this reason we are enclosing with this issue two leaflets which make the whole process easy for you and us: you simply write the name and address on the label part of the leaflet; write your message on the bottom part; do the same with the other leaflet; and send them both to us. We will take care of sending a sample copy along with your message to your friends.

We ask your help in this sub drive; we need it. But please don't write to just any one who comes to mind. The persons selected should be genuine potential subscribers, or else your time and ours and sample copies will all be wasted. Give the matter a few minutes' careful thought. And if you can use more leaflets, just send for them.

In MR's F. O. Matthiessen memorial issue (October 1950) we ran a chapter from Matthiessen's then-unpublished book on Theodore Dreiser. The book has now been published, and we heartily recommend it to all MR readers. It is published by William Sloane Associates at \$3.50 and can be obtained by members of the Book Find Club as a "special selection" at \$1.89. (Book Find Club, 401 Broadway, New York 13, N. Y.)

With this issue we begin the third year of publication. Both editors will speak at a birthday party which Monthly Review Associates is putting on on May 17th at Adelphi Hall, 74 Fifth Avenue, New York City, starting at 8:15 p.m. We're looking forward to seeing you there. New York subscribers will receive a notice through the mails, but any others who may be in town are cordially invited.

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